

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 210640Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9334

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T JIDDA 6840

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DOD FOR ISA AND USMTM DHAHRAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, IR

SUBJECT: ARMS POLICY FOR SAUDI ARABIA

REF: USMTM DTG 121140Z NOV 74 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY FULLY CONCURS IN CHUSMTM'S ASSESSMENT OF CONSEQUENCES OF EQUIVOCATION ON SAG REQUESTS OR LESS THAN EQUAL TREATMENT WITH IRAN. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY POINTED OUT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, DECISIONS ON WHAT IS RELEASABLE TO SAG CANNOT BE MADE WITHOUT REGARD TO WHAT USG HAS ALREADY AGREED TO RELEASE TO GOI.

2. WE MUST ACCEPT THE FACT THAT APPARENT CARTE BLANCHE GIVEN TO IRAN TO PURCHASE US WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND IRANIAN WILLINGNESS TO SPEND THE BILLIONS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THEM HAS INCREASED SAUDI ANXIETIES ABOUT IRAN'S LONG TERM INTENTIONS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE PERSIAN GULF. WE MAY PARTIALLY ALLAY SOME OF THESE ANXIETIES BY GIVING THE SAUDIS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUY THOSE WEAPONS SYSTEMS MADE AVAILABLE TO IRAN. (THE SAUDIS--WITH OUR HELP-- HAVE BECOME QUITE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN

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ABSORB).

3. IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT ENCOURAGING SAG-GOI COOPERATION IN DEFENSE AND SECURITY WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE SAG WILL NOT ENTER INTO A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH THEY ARE BY DEFINITION SECOND BEST AND THAT THEREFORE EQUALITY OF TREATMENT (IN QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY) MUST PREVAIL IN ARMAMENTS FIELD. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF SAUDI INITIATIVES TOWARD COOPERATION, SUCH AS RECENT VISIT OF DEPUTY MODA PRINCE TURKI TO IRAN, IS INCREASED SAG AWARENESS OF USG OPEN-HANDEDNESS TOWARD GOI.

4. WE WOULD NOT WISH TO COMMENT ON US ARMS POLICY TOWARDS IRAN WITHOUT KNOWING ALL THE FACTORS WHICH HAD GONE INTO THAT POLICY. BUT WE SUGGEST THAT IF THE FEELING NOW EXISTS THAT USG MAY HAVE BEEN TOO LIBERAL IN ITS ARMS POLICY TOWARD THE GULF AREA, THE PLACE TO START DRAWING THE LINE CONTINUES TO BE IRAN, NOT SAUDI ARABIA. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, WE MUST NOW FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF EARLIER DECISIONS TO RELEASE ITEMS TO IRAN, BY GRANTING EQUAL TREATMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA. WE DO NOT WISH TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE SAUDI APPETITES IN THE MILITARY FIELD AND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SAUDI ARABIA THIS CAN BE BEST ACCOMPLISHED BY A MORE CAREFUL AND CRITICAL APPROACH TO FUTURE REQUESTS FROM THE SHAH FOR ACCESS TO PRODUCTS OF OUR ADVANCED MILITARY TECHNOLOGY.
AKINS

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